

2

A
L E T T E R

TO THE

AUTHOR of a LETTER

T O

Mr. B U X T O N. K

In which it is proved, that the Design of that
LETTER has been entirely misunder-
stood, and that the Author of it is the *real*
Friend of

Sir EDWARD DASTLEY and
Mr. C O K E.

Aut Laudi Simulatione detrahare aut vituperationi laude.

^{by}
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TO THE AUTHOR OF THE

LETTER

TO MR. BUXTON.

SIR,

AND I been so fortunate as to
H have seen your Letter at its first
appearance in publick, I should
long since have done myself the honour
of returning you thanks for the entertain-
ment it afforded me, and of congratula-
ting you upon the fame you have acquired
by so ingenious and elaborate a perform-
ance. By this, Sir, we find, that in you
A alone

alone is centered all the united force of genius of the greatest men of antiquity : The accurate reasoning of an Aristotle, the imagery of a Plato, the irony of a Socrates, and the thundering eloquence of a Demosthenes.

But the talent which I would chiefly chuse to dwell upon is IRONY. A talent seldom seen in any great degree of perfection, but which shines forth in you with the greatest lustre. A talent you have so happily exerted, as not only to persuade the *friends* of Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey, that you were the sincere well-wisher to, and defender of their cause, but even to deceive the *Candidates* themselves into the same belief, at the very time you were exerting all the powers of reason, and all the brilliancy of imagination to burlesque and satirize *them* and their *friends*, and to defend the sentiments, promote the interest, and celebrate

brate the worth of *Sir Edward Ashley* and *Mr. Coke*. A conduct so meritorious, a plan so admirably designed, so happily executed, and in its consequences so pregnant with benefit to the new candidates, cannot fail of entitling you to their best thanks, and of securing to you their everlasting gratitude.

Whoever is conversant with party writings must be sensible, that fulsome panegyrics and flattering encomiums, always *injure* the party they are intended to *serve*, and that unjust reflections and false invectives always *serve* the party they are designed to *injure*. You, Sir, to avail yourself of this circumstance, artfully chose the pleasing mask of irony; by means of which, you have with the utmost happiness, commended with censure, and satirized with praise.

Evident, however, as this point appears to me, many there are so infatuated with

envy, or misled by prejudice, that they would rather suppose you serious than ludicrous, though the former supposition would stamp your name with an indelible disgrace, and the latter would adorn your brow with never-fading laurels. For upon the one supposition, how could they ever vindicate you from the guilt of running into *idle declamation, puerile conceits, mean evasions, disingenuous assertions, evident misrepresentations, and manifest contradictions* ! Whereas upon the other, it is plain, that these are not to be considered as the *faults* of an *ignorant* writer, but as the *beauties* of an *artful* one, who introduced them only to colour the pretence of *serving* a cause, which it was his intention to *betray*.

To establish this position is the design of my entering the lists ; and conscious of the rectitude of my intentions, fearless of all opponents, I shall boldly erect my BANNER OF DEFIANCE. *

* Vide (in the Tablets of the Memory) Mr. de Grey's speech.

So confident am I of the truth of the position I have advanced, that I dare even to venture the establishment of it upon the proof which your first paragraph affords. For you tell us there, that you esteem and reverence Mr. Buxton as a gentleman of *solid judgment, distinguished integrity, and inflexible honour*. Yet in your 22d page you directly *contradict* this, by telling us, that this gentleman has, (by forsaking Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey) *forsaken* the cause of *virtue* and of *honour*. If then we were to suppose you meant the latter sentence seriously, you would be guilty of the absurdity of saying, that Mr. B. is at the same time a man of DISTINGUISHED INTEGRITY, and a man WHO HAS LOST HIS INTEGRITY, a man of INFLEXIBLE HONOUR, and yet a man whose HONOUR is FLEXIBLE.

Can any one, Sir, who believes you capable of writing *common sense*, believe you

could write such a *glaring contradiction* as this, did they not know that you only meant to expose the absurdity of those who blamed Mr. B. or any other gentleman, for forsaking Sir A. Wodehouse or Mr. de Grey.

But this contradiction, admirable as it is, is not the only one you are content to afford us in this passage. For if Mr. Buxton, (as you yourself allow us) has a *solid judgment* to *distinguish* who are bad representatives, and who are likely to make good ones ; if he has *distinguished integrity* and *inflexible honour* to act in consequence of the determination of his judgment ; let the most unletter'd mind determine, whether the only inference you could mean to draw, be not, that the gentlemen whom Mr. B. has forsaken are improper, and that Sir Edward Astley and Mr. Coke are likely to make proper representatives of this County.

You

You tell us next, "that the principal thing *always* to be attended to, is, the preservation of the *public peace*, and that nothing so effectually destroy the public peace as a contested election." What an admirable ridicule have you here given us of the popular argument for the old members, which under a pretence of preserving the *peace*, would destroy the *liberty* of the county. For might not one as well suppose, you would seriously assert that there is no difference between a refreshing sleep and a lethargic slumber, as that you would seriously confound all distinction between PUBLIC PEACE and PUBLIC HAPPINESS. Had you been serious, and had you even never read any other history but that of our own nation, would you not have said? That the principal thing always to be attended to is the PUBLIC HAPPINESS, though the attention to this, should even for a time DESTROY the PUBLIC PEACE. But the public

public peace, which the adherents to Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey have done you the injustice to think that you say *ought always to be attended to*, you tell us in express words immediately afterwards, *ought not always to be attended to*. “ For “ when the representatives of any place “ are negligent of the important trust “ committed to them,” or when they are found incapable of discharging it, in either of these cases (you tell us) “ it is the “ duty of every honest man to exert himself “ with vigour in opposing the re-election “ of such unworthy members.” How plainly here do you discover what is the party you really mean to serve ! And how extraordinary must have been the fascination which could prevent Sir Armine and his colleague from seeing it, when you make use of the very argument to justify opposition, which the friends of the new candidates have so frequently urged in their own justification, and which can never be refuted.

Now

Now Sir, (to use one of your own beautiful methods of transition) we attend you to Ireland, where like

A second Thomas, or at once
To name them all, another Duns

Having made a most curious distinction between ENDS and MOTIVES of Action, you proceed to consider the *measures* of our party, or rather the *measures* of *some few individuals*. Candidly and yet at the same time satirically hinting, (that as the leaders on both sides are answerable for the conduct of every *single* adherent) how much Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey have to answer for. Archly reminding them of the spirit of *their* party, and the vigour of *their* measures, in the removal of a certain amiable and respectable Nobleman from his attendance upon his Majesty.

You talk next with great beauty of language, of *petulant* and *illiberal calumny*, of
Lord

Lord Townshend, of Torrents, and of dirty streams disemboquing through his Lordship upon Mr. de Grey, and blotting his fair character with the deepest sable. The *fineness* of the *colouring* here is undoubtedly very conspicuous upon any supposition, but I defy the acutest critic to tell me the *design* of the piece without the aid of my hypothesis. For you yourself ask, “ what “ has Lord Townshend to do with us and “ our representatives ? What then can be your meaning ? But that the fair character of Mr. de Grey is blotted with the deepest sable, which ever sticks to a representative, who owes all his support as a *candidate* for the *house of commons*, to a *member* of the *house of lords*. This hypothesis clears the whole.

So the pure limpid stream when foul
with stains

Of rushing torrents, and descending rains,
Runs itself clear, and as it runs, refines,
Till by degrees the floating mirror
shines. From

From Ireland we attend you to St. Andrew's Hall on the day of nomination, where you almost entirely drop the mask, and speak, (pardon me if I say) almost too plainly that you went to support the nomination of the new candidates. For you tell Mr. Buxton expressly, "That the first thing that appear'd worthy of notice at least on your Part, (i. e. worthy of Mr. Buxton's notice,) was Sir William Harbord's speech."

Now let common sense determine, whether a friend of the old members would have passed over *their Speeches* with such contemptuous silence? Nay not only pass them by in silence, but assert by implication that they *were not worthy of Notice*. However prudence might have dictated silence in respect to Sir Armine's, can it ever be supposed that the same conduct would have been observed by a friend in relation to Mr. de Grey's? No, this is a subject which
would

would have fired the coldest breast, and fertilised the most sterile genius. Admiration herself would have ceased to be dumb, and eloquence would have flowed spontaneously from her lips. Had *you* been disposed to praise it, I conceive that you would have said,——“It was such an oration as I defy
 “the most bigotted admirers of the antient
 “to produce its equal. In it was united
 “the copiousness of a Cicero with the
 “strength of a Demosthenes. An oration
 “which for roundness of periods, justness
 “of reasoning, beauty of its tropes, and
 “aptness in similitudes was (to use the expression of Theobald) such an one as
 “none but itself can be its parallel. But let
 “me not in the warmth of my encomiums
 “on the *oration* forget the *orator*. His
 “manner was as admirable as his speech
 “was inimitable. Such was the speech and
 “such the manner as would not have disgraced Lee’s *Alexander* or Brown’s *Barbarossa*
 “A speech which unfortunately not being
 “committed to writing we cannot say of it
 quod

*quod nec Jovis Ira nec ignes,
Nec poterat ferrum, nec edax abolere Vetustas.*

“ Yet we will be bold to say that it must for
“ ever remain indelibly imprinted on the
“ minds of the audience. For can it ever
“ be forgot, when the orator with his arm
“ wielded aloft told us he would boldly erect
“ his Banner of Defiance, can it I say ever
“ be forgot, how the new candidates and
“ their friends shrunk back affrighted.
“ Just so have I seen a hen with her tender
“ brood stepping into a barn to peck the
“ threshed corn, struck with dismay
“ hurry back, when she beheld the flail
“ of the husbandman brandished on high.”

Having now paid a just tribute of praise
to Mr. de Grey's oratory, I am ready to ac-
company you in an examination of the
speech of Sir William Harbord, that vene-
rable veteran in the cause of liberty, that
respectable father of as respectable a son.
But here Sir I shall imitate your *quadruple*
division

division, of Sir William's speech, and make a *quadruple* Division of this part of your letter. *First*, your *satire* against Mr. de Grey *alone*. *Secondly*, against Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey *together*. *Thirdly*, against Sir Armine *alone*. *Fourthly*, your *encomium* upon Sir Edward Astley, and Mr. Coke.

You begin your examination of Sir Wm. Harbord's speech with great pleasantry, telling us *ironically*, that Sir William said, that Mr. de Grey was upon the Decease of the late Lord Townshend, "*nominated nobody knows how, and elected by nobody knows whom.*" Intimating with the most exquisite humour and the most biting satire, that it is *but too well known, by whom* Mr. de Grey, was at *that time nominated*, and *by whom* he was *elected*; viz. by a JUNTO of a FEW FAMILIES, I beg pardon, I should have said, a FEW NOBLE FAMILIES. Then after ironically celebrating Mr. de Grey as a great general, for taking

a town which could not resist, you humourously tell us, *not* that Mr. de Grey was on the death of Lord Townshend *elected without opposition*, which is literally *true*; but that he was *approv'd of* and *elected* by the *united Voice* of the County, which you know to be *false*. But which indeed you introduced with great Art, to recall to the remembrance of the friends of the new candidates, the DISGUST, which the MAJORITY of the county shew upon that occasion, at having a Gentleman known but to very few forced upon them, because they had not time for an OPPOSITION. But the concluding stroke of your satire on Mr. de Grey is the finest of any, it is indeed the *climax* of the whole. I mean the *motto* you have chosen for that Gentleman's standard, DETUR DIGNIORI; taking only the *comparative* degree between him and his colleague, but leaving the *superlative* DETUR DIGNISSIMIS, as a device for Sir Edward Astley and Mr. Coke.

In

In your satire upon Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey *together* you seem to have outdone in facetiousness your own outdoings. For what you have said in answer to the dislike the true friends of Liberty have taken to see the Militia uniting as one body in elections, amounts to this; that *Militia Colonels* are much too *harmless* a set of gentlemen, to put us in any danger by *unsheathing their Swords*.

We come now to your satire on Sir A. Wodehouse *alone*. But great as I esteem your merits as a writer, impartiality obliges me to observe that *here* you do not seem to have preserved your usual spirit of irony. For it is not sufficiently evident at first sight, that Sir W. Harbord's Objection to Sir Armine, was not, as you *seem* to say, "that
 " he had *served* us *too long* in Parliament,
 " and that an *honour* of this nature should
 " not be *hereditary* in a family;" but, that he had been *too long* in Parliament *without serving us*, and that a trust of this kind
 should

should not *continue* in a Family, when, it has *ceased* to be an *honour*. It must be confessed indeed, that a little reflexion would teach us, your meaning could be no other than what I have explained it. For had you *seriously meant* what you *seemed* to say, and had you been really the *Friend* of Sir A. Wodehouse, can we suppose that you would have neglected this fair opportunity of enumerating the important services which he has conferred upon this County in *particular*, and his *Country* in *general*, and the effulgence of honour which he has reflected upon his noble ancestors. Had you, I say, been *really* the friend of Sir Armine, this you had certainly done, instead of praising the virtues of his ancestors 700 years ago.

You are too well read in poetry, not to remember,

B

They

They that on glorious ancestors enlarge,
Produce their *debt*, instead of their *discharge*,

* * * * *

If virtues at his noble hands you crave,
Bid him not raise his fathers from the grave;
To stand for fame on his forefathers feet,
By *heraldry* prov'd *valiant* or *discreet*,
Men should press forward in fame's glorious
chace,
Nobles look *backward* and so lose the race.

But it will perhaps be said, that you
have mentioned the services done us by Sir
Armine, and the honour he has acquired
by refusing honours. You do indeed tell
us, that instead of Sir William Harbord's
urging Sir Armine's long representation as
a reason for discharging him, "it would
" have been more *generous* (plainly im-
" plying that you do not think it would
" have been more *just*) to have held him
" up to his constituents, *as a man grown*
" *old in their service, as a man who for*
" *more than thirty years has executed this*
" *important*

“ important trust with unwearied attention,
 “ disinterested fidelity, and unbiassed honour ;
 “ unplaced, unpensioned, unennobled ; no
 “ ministerial ducats swelling his revenues,
 “ no lordly title fluttering in his ear, nor
 “ even a ribband or a star glittering in his
 “ eye.” This indeed you have said : But
 besides the ludicrousness of the passage I
 have already remarked, does not the whole
 plainly appear both in *style* and *thought*, to
 be an excellent banter and severe sarcasm
 upon the *bombast* and *fustian* of modern
 panegyrics. For who that is a real friend
 to Sir Armine would talk so pompously of
places, pensions, and nobility ; it can an-
 swer no other end than to suggest the *real*
fact, not that they have been *refused*, but
 that they have *never been offered*.

Such a suggestion would have been an
 unpardonable blunder, if we suppose you
 an adherent, but exquisite art, if we sup-
 pose you an opponent.

We now come to the last head of the *quadruple* division. Your encomium on Sir Edward Astley and Mr. Coke. But we will begin with that part of it which relates to Mr. Coke, as that stands first in your Letter. Of that gentleman you say expressly, "*When we consider this gentleman as honourable in himself, honourable in his connections, high in the esteem of his own country, happy in the love of his neighbours, and secure of his present seat in parliament, he is deservedly the object of our esteem.*" If this be not a strong recommendation of Mr. Coke, I should be glad to be informed what is. Can it be supposed that a writer can give such a character of a candidate, and at the same time object to him? Yet such is the glaring inconsistency with which all have charged you, who have mistaken your Letter for a vindication of the old members, and from which nothing can clear you but my supposition.

position. But how implacably envious must they be of your fame, who think you could seriously mean to object to a gentleman of this character, "that *because* he has an estate of some thousands a year in another county, besides the hundreds he has in this at present, and *because* he must one day have the greatest interest of any gentleman in this county; *therefore* it was ill-judged in him to offer himself a candidate at this time." If there be any one who does not perceive this to be *irony* at first view, it is in vain for me to attempt to reason with him, as I must for ever despair of convincing him. Whoever does not discern this, must be as blind as one who should not be able to distinguish a star of BATH METAL from one of STERLING GOLD, or he must be as destitute of comprehension, as one who should mistake a *despicable pun*, for a *brilliant bon-mot*. *

* See Page 6th of the Letter to Mr. Buxton.

I now attend you, Sir, to make one in your *tete-a-tete* with Mr. Buxton. Be not startled at this Irish-cism. You love the Irish too well for their compliments to their Lord Lieutenant, to be displeased with any thing in their manner. And indeed in this expression I professedly imitate *your* manner as well as *their's*. For you tell Mr. Buxton, "now you are alone "with him," (i. e. when you are writing to him in public) "you will give him your "sentiments concerning Sir E. Astley :," which are in effect, that you honour him on account of his family, and esteem him for his own intrinsic worth. You add likewise, "that there *was* a time when "you should have rejoiced to see his interest rise in the county, at which time "had he offered himself a candidate, "probably he would not have been opposed, "most probably he would have succeeded." How happy are you Sir, in preserving the same climax in your encomiums, as you did

did in your satire. For you tell Mr. B. (in private indeed) that so great is your preference of Sir E. Astley, to Sir A. Wodehouse or Mr. de Grey, that you wished him to have been elected a representative of this county, though it could not have been effected, but by the expulsion of one of the present members, or by the exclusion of the other. You afterwards indeed reassume the comic mask, and say, "as Sir Edward resigned his pretensions *then*, ought he to reassume them *now*?" Why not? If he was respectable *then*, is he less so *now*? If his pretensions were just at *that time*, are they not equally so at *this*? Had you a claim on an estate which you did not chuse to prosecute *some little time ago*, would you think *that forbearance* invalidated your title *now*? Pardon me, if to a man of your quick discernment, I appear too prolix upon so plain a point. These questions though addressed to you, are only intended for the conviction

tion of those, before whose eyes prepossession has thrown a mist, which not all the dazzling beauties of your composition have yet been able to dispel.

In the beginning of your next paragraph, you tell a gentleman of "*disguised integrity*," that he will perhaps make an "*ungenerous reflection*,"† and say Sir A. Wodehouse, did at that time *desert* Sir E. Astley, and that this argument is *indeed* his *fort*. Give me leave to add in confirmation of your assertions, that it is indeed an *impregnable fort*. You then talk with infinite humour of Sir Armine's *good understanding* in foreseeing difficulties from an opposition to Sir Edward, when (as you had just before said) "*probably he would not have been opposed*" And of his *candour* and *friendship* in representing to Sir Edward *these bars to his success*, at a time, (when as you had just before observed) "*most probably he would have succeeded.*"

Admirable

† See Page 14 in the Letter.

Admirable burlesque on such *uncommon* friendship, and such *sagacious foresight!*

You tell us next, that Sir Armine wished not to embroil himself with his late worthy partner Lord Townshend. If this was really the Fact, “well might the indignant “spirits of his honest ancestors (as you “have happily suggested) burst from their “tombs, and shake their venerable heads to “see their descendant starting aside like a “broken bow, and become an INSTRUMENT in the hands of a *Townshend* and “a *Walpole*.” So great is your propensity to satire, that in the midst of your encomiums on Sir Edward, you cannot refrain from discharging the whole artillery of your wit on Sir Armine and his friends. For can we suppose that a Wodehouse, a name once revered and almost idolized by all who were well-wishers to the *liberty* and *independency* of this county; can we suppose that ever any one of that family would

be fearful of opposing the wishes of a Nobleman, by joining with a Gentleman of *independent fortune*, and what is better of an *independent spirit*, can we suppose that a Wodehouse would thus meanly crouch at the foot of nobility, and in one moment offer as a sacrifice to this glittering idol the boasted independency of seven hundred years? Forbid it honour! Forbid it virtue! But why Sir, must Lord Townshend at every turn fall under the lash of your pen? His family, his character, is too respectable to deserve this treatment. And why should he be perpetually dragged like a criminal into the scene when you yourself ask *what has he to do with us and our election?* Let him I beg enjoy in peace, the pleasing triumph of conscious virtue, the delightful reflection of having contributed to a nation's happiness, and the justly merited applause of a brave and grateful people for having secured to them the charter of their liberties. Talk of his Lordship's administration

himself and Mr. Mills. Admirable humour, exquisite satire! For who doubts Sir Armine's *readiness* to promise on these occasions? Witness that very recent promise to a nobleman in a neighbouring county which cannot be forgotten, and another less recent to a gentleman in this, "he who does good by stealth, and blush to find it fame," who is very apt to let things of this nature slip his memory. Indeed in respect to Sir Edward, Sir Armine did not show a *readiness* (as you yourself hint) but a *backwardness* to promise, for at last the promise was not *given* but *extorted*. With what delicacy therefore, and yet with what shrewdness have you vindicated Sir E. Astley for having no reliance on *such* a promise! When the *manner* of making it shew so plainly, that *no other dependence* could be put upon it, but this, that Sir Armine would with *great readiness* promise to *support the other party*?

I now come to the remaining part of the *disagreeable* task you imposed upon yourself." I mean the subject of General Warrants. But this you preface with such a character

as I hope is the mere *coinage* of *fancy's* brain. I am sure I know no person who deserves it. But though I can not judge of the *likeness*, I can not but admire the *beauty* of the *drawing*. I scarcely ever saw a finer burlesque on that excellent figure in Bathæan Rhetoric the *Anticlimax*. For you tell us that this Man "unawed by conscience" is likewise "unchecked by modesty." Amazing! But what is more astonishing still, that he is "unsilenced by conviction." A sentence not to be equalled for beauty of language by any one I know of: not even by that in which you tell us, "a contested election occasions the *destruction* of *society*," but what is to be sure more extraordinary still, the alienation of friendships "and feuds of families." There was a gentleman supposed to have been the Author of the Pamphlet to which you allude, one Richard Merryfellow, Esq; but one to whom your character is by no means applicable. A man who has *much* wit, but
too

too little discretion. One who has *talents* sufficient to adorn the *best* subjects, and to make even the *worst* of some consequence. But who has (except in a few cases) been so unfortunate in his choice of *subjects*, that our *smiles* are frequently mixed with *pain*, and our *admiration* with *disgust*.

As to the subject of *General Warrants*, on which you have written so much, I shall say very little. For you have with great pleantry repeated again the arguments which have been pillaged from the Annual Register, which have been as constantly *refuted* as they have been frequently *urged*: Intimating by this happy stroke of art that nothing can be said in defence of those who did not vote them to be illegal. You likewise happily hint, that as Mr. de Grey was not a Member of the house when the question of the illegality of General Warrants was debated, he could have no other reason for the Defence of a vote he *did not* give

give, but that he is *obliged* to defend the votes of a *certain person* in *another house* as well as his own. But the finishing stroke of your satyrical defence of Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey upon this subject, is, your declaration that they readily allow that general warrants *are illegal and unconstitutional*, and yet that they would have had an *act of parliament* passed to have *made* them so. If any man can be bold enough to assert that in defiance of common sense, you seriously intended this argument as a defence of the old members, I will give up the Point I have been labouring to establish. But surely every one who is not warped by prejudice or blinded by envy, must acknowledge that it is the most *exquisite irony* and most *biting satire*.

Having now Sir clearly proved that you are *no enemy*, but a *friend* to the present opposition, that you do not prefer *Sir Armine Wodehouse* and *Mr. de Grey*, but *Sir Edward Astley*

Afley and *Mr. Coke*, that you are not the *defender* but the *opponent* of those who voted for General Warrants,—Having proved, that what has been mistaken in your Letter for *satire* is really *praise*, and what has been mistaken for *praise*, is really *satire*, that what has been thought *burlesque*, was intended as *serious*, and what has been thought *serious* was intended as *burlesque* ;—having proved that all your *declamation* is *reasoning*, and all your *reasoning* is *declamation*, that all your seeming *contradictions* are *consistencies*, and all your seeming *consistencies* are *contradictions*, that your seeming *misrepresentations* are *facts*, and your seeming *facts* are *misrepresentations*, that what appear to be mean *evasions* are *indisputable truths*, and what appear to be *indisputable truths* are mean *evasions* ;—having proved these points, I now leave you to the full enjoyment of the good wishes of the party you have so eminently served, and to the possession of the fame you have so justly merited.

I am Sir, 17 NO 68

With the greatest esteem and respect,

Your most obliged,

and most obedient

humble Servant.